

REMARKS

Pending Claims

After entry of this amendment, claims 2-4, 6, 7, and 10 are pending, of which claims 6 and 10 are independent.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejected all of the previously pending claims 2-4 and 6-10 for indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In short, the Examiner could not tell from claims 6 and 10 how the "pieces" of the invention fit and worked together, and he was unsure about whether certain phrases related to the same structures or to different structures. The applicant has now carefully reviewed the claims and has amended them to resolve the uncertainties and ambiguities.

The previous claims 6 and 10 referred to a "scrubber" and a "column". The specification states that the invention "regards an assembly ... comprising a scrubber, a column, a separator **or another conventional separation equipment** assembled with a deliquidizer" (emphasis added). In other words, a scrubber and a column are just two examples of the separation equipment that the invention can be used with, not two separate components of the overall separator.

Moreover, as this and other specification text point out, the invention involves a combination of some existing separation apparatus (such as scrubber, column, separator) and the novel deliquidizer, which may be located either within the existing separation apparatus (Figures 2-4) or external to but connected to the existing separation apparatus (Figure 1). The deliquidizer thus forms a *pre-separator* for the main separation apparatus; in other words, it provides for a separation stage in addition to the one that the existing separation apparatus already provides. Claims 6 and 10 have accordingly been amended to recite a "main separation apparatus" and the deliquidizer.

Claims 6 and 10 have also been amended not only to unambiguously define the various parts of the separation arrangement, but also to better define the connective and functional relationships of the various parts. In particular, it should now be clear from these claims that because of the rotation of the fluid, which of course give rise to a centrifugal force, liquid is forced outward to be channeled between the pipe-like inner

casing and the outer casing of the deliquidizer, into the main vessel, whereas the less dense gas will be in the middle area and can exit the deliquidizer from the center.

It was found that claims 6 and 10 also had several redundancies, which perhaps caused part of the Examiner's confusion. Various phrases have been moved within claims 6 and 10 to better associate what they recite with the structural elements they refer to.

Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled because it is believed they are implicit in other claims.

Claims 2-4 and 7 have been amended to use terms consistent with claim 6.

Allowable Subject Matter

Examiner Hopkins indicated that claims 6 and 10 would be allowable if they were rewritten to overcome the §112 rejections. It is respectfully submitted that claims 6 and 10 *have* been so rewritten, such that they should now be in condition for allowance, along with claims 2-4 and 7, which depend from claim 6.

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Respectfully submitted,

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